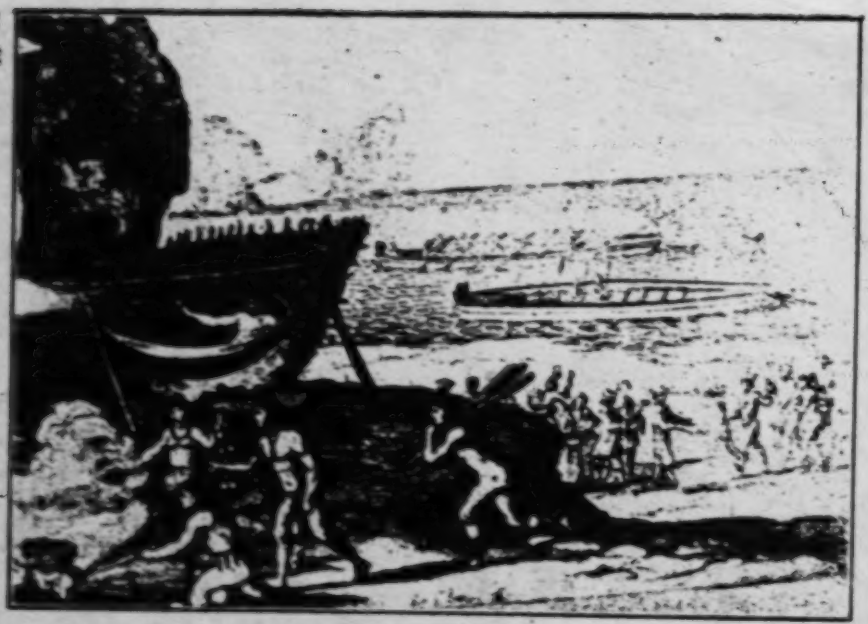
1:Breton & La Paix--4a M-5 (1635-1647) 1929 ST13 Callinago ST13

501
513



Caribs and Europeans
according to Father du Tertre

342 On top they put sloping rafters which reach to the ground, and cover everything with palm leaves or reeds. One can see nothing inside except by the light of the fire or by the hole through which they enter, which is 2 or 3 cubits high. The women clean the huts, and the boys [306] clean the carbet and the space around it. During the day the men eat and talk in the carbet, and at night they retire to the small huts to sleep.

● 513 Their hammocks are nothing more than large pieces of woven 252 cotton which the women make on a sort of draper's loom, 3 or 4 ells [284] wide and 5 or 6 feet long. They leave little ribbons on the two ends, to which they attach stronger ribbons made of pita, and then attach these in turn to a larger cord also made of pita. They hang the beds by means of these cords in the middle of their huts to two forks and they sleep gently and comfortably. They make small and large ones. They carry the hammocks wherever they must spend the night. The French use them commonly. Since these hammocks are easily portable, they do not clutter up the houses, and they fold easily and are stowed away conveniently. Some are brought to us from the mainland (besides those we trade with the Caribs for); the English and Portugese also make them. The Caribs paint theirs in Moresque [531] patterns with a black that never fades. Those of the mainland savages are also painted similarly.

501 After talking of their lodgings and beds, a word must be said of the boats they use at sea. We call them pirogues, they name them kanaoa [canaoa]. These are made from large trees which they hollow out with fire, as well as with hatchets, and finish with adzes. They then shape the outside in the form proper for navigation. Because they are low, they build them up by attaching boards all around with liana, which serves them [637] as cord, and caulk them with folded mahot bark. They tie poles across to serve as benches while they row. They make these boats in all sizes. Those they call canaoa are what we call pirogues and are never less than 25 or 30 feet and go up to 50 or 60 feet. Others, which we call canoes and they kouliala, are of all sizes under 25 feet, some so small as to carry only one man for fishing. The canaoa are not pointed like those of the French, for they cut off the end and seal it with a board. They carry up to 40 and 50 persons with baggage. Big ones use two sails, and small ones a single sail. They row with small oars about like

415 baskets with two weaves filled with custard-apple tree leaves between, and which are impenetrable by rain. There are also hébechets [or: ibichets], which are the sacks through which they strain their manioc flour. Also, there is the couleuvre [lit: 'adder'—because of its snake-like shape?—Ed.], a kind of arm-long sock to press the flour [252] in. They attach the top to a peg and from the bottom roll a staff which they weigh down heavily, either by sitting on it or otherwise, [352] and in no time their flour is dry. Others make matoutous, which are their tables. They are low, some round, some square, a little higher 285 than a cassava. All this small handiwork which we have mentioned is made of certain large rushes that they call oualomam [oualloman] that they dry and split into long, thin strips and paint black or red 386 before using them. The red is from annatto, the black is from [65] the gum tree or the sandalwood which they burn. So that the dyes will be fast, they dissolve the second bark of a certain tree in water, which gives a strong liquid glue. They wet the reeds with this, then put on their annatto or black, then rub the reeds again with the gluey water. After drying in the sun, the paint never comes off. Others among them make belts; others fishing lines and so forth. When they [513 304] go to bed, they always make a fire beneath their beds.

The Labors of The Women

513 462 The women are almost slaves of the men. They provide them with food and drink, take care of the children, and follow them everywhere to prepare their food.

As soon as they get up, they also go to bathe. Then they begin to scrape and shred manioc, make bread for breakfast, and prepare whatever they have for their husbands. Breakfast over, the women go to work. Some go to their gardens to plant manioc or sweet potatoes with a pointed stick, since they do not use hoes; others weed. 303 462 The men do not trouble at all with that. The women who stay at the hut make cotton hammocks or make oil to rub or grease their husbands' hair with. They make this oil from a seed which they call couâheu. They first let the seed rot, then dry it over the fire, then knead it between their hands, often spitting on it. Then they put it in the sun for a while and afterwards throw it in their couleuvres and press it to squeeze out the oil. They also make oil from the

535 of ouicou [kind of beer]. They must drink it to the last drop, even
273 if they are ready to burst. I have seen some almost choke, become pale and uncertain, and a Carib embraced them from behind to relieve them. He tightened their stomachs so hard that they vomited a part of it, but this was only to make room for more ouicou. [203]

[533] The Carib women only sing when they are drunk. They usually sing only one song, and this is sung so badly that we should weep
635 rather than laugh. When the women attempt to dance they are in no danger of getting pleurisy because they do not exert themselves jumping. The young people, married and unmarried, sometimes join together and pass entire nights in dancing, without daring to stop out of superstitious motivations. A woman takes a calabash full of peas or pebbles which rattle, and all dance to the cadence of this sound. Now and then they yell such sharp cries that it is startling. It is worse when the men perform a dance after having eaten Arawak. They make much more noise. A man carries a calabash at the end of a long pole and marching in front he makes it rattle. All the others follow him. Sometimes they are in a line and sometimes in a circle, in motion and not holding hands. At the same time they all have their left hand on their head and their right hand on their buttocks. Next, the right moves to their head and their left hand moves to their buttocks, and this continues. Joined with these movements is shuffling with their feet together which is very painful, yet they never jump or leave their position. [269]

● [513] For their feasts they have twelve to fifteen large pots which hold as much as the same number of our casks would hold when filled with
524 drink. [119] When they wrestle the Caribs do not use body holds but only hold each other by the arm above the elbow. They give each other such jerks that one of the wrestlers, one day in my presence, was thrown to the ground by his adversary and stayed there more than a quarter of an hour before he regained consciousness. This exercise is common among them but only at their drinking parties. [368]

316 When a pirogue is made people are asked to help drag it down from the mountain to the sea. They are invited to the feast which follows. In this country if there is no feast, there is no work party. [144]

5. Settlements and Boats

361 The Caribs have only a very small clearing at the place where they live, which is a place for the carbet and some smaller houses around it. This is planned so that the Europeans will not be able to know about them or capture them by surprise. It is for the same reason that the greater part of them are established on the windward side of the island, because here the waves are rough and terrain is high and it is difficult to gain access to it. Nevertheless, they are always near rivers because they would not be able to forego water either for drinking or for bathing. [279] There is a yard between the carbet and the other houses. Each one cleans the area of it in front of his own house. After supper they gather and talk around the fire, which they make if the evening is cool, until they say to each other "let us go in and sleep." On the next day they do not complain about the evening dew and they have not caught colds. [85] They [364] take away fishbones, peels, and their refuse from the tables, and throw them far away, because such things breed chiggers. [303]

344 "We have to wrap cassava in thick leaves in the middle of the carbet." The carbet is the room, market place, work shop, storage place, dining hall, and dormitory, and the community house of the Caribs. It is almost like an oval cradle. Its height [sic] is sixty feet and its width is twenty feet. It is built plainly, but with all the care and utility one might imagine. The entrances are toward the center of the house, and are four diametrically opposed holes. These entrance holes are only four feet high. There are no other doors or windows, and there are no pegs or nails. There is only one storey and no chambers. There are no divisions nor hindrances inside the carbet which would impede 12 people walking side by side in a row. At the height of 7 feet there are beams 10 feet long to hang 100 to 120 cotton [513] hammocks, where the Caribs rest peacefully in perfect harmony without quarrels or noise. Women rarely enter this house except to serve the men. [476]

342 The Caribs have thatched houses (mánna) built a little like those of our peasants except that the roof is made of the upper part of reeds or of palmetto leaves which extend to the ground. They are oval in shape and lack windows entirely. In place of a door there is only a

484 ajoupa or sheds, which they cover with leaves, and they sleep there. Most of them tie up their hammocks to a couple of trees and sleep without further ceremony. Unfortunately when they are in the woods [136] or along the seashore the mosquitos wake them up with their humming, and if this is not sufficient, they sting them so terribly that one must be an unfeeling fellow not to be bothered by them. [88]

286 352 The Caribs cut four big pieces of wood which are round and smooth. They lean and attach two of these to the purlins of the house. The other two are firmly bound crosswise over the first ones. One of these is above and the other is below, in proportion to the size of the hammock they wish to make. Around this frame women pass their cotton thread which they handle well, although they don't exert themselves too much. They leave half a foot unwoven at both extremities and divide this unwoven part into small groups of (looped) threads. They tie a thin cord, called ébenebou, at the first group of looped threads. This cord is extended (out from the threads) to the length of the arm and then is bent back and passed through the second bundle of looped threads (thereby forming a large loop). From the second bundle this same cord is extended outwards a similar distance and is bent back and passed through the third bundle of looped threads, and similar loops are made up to the last bundle of threads (where the ébenebou cord is tied). A thicker cord is passed through the tops of these large loops (which are thereby drawn together), and this is the cord by which they suspend the hammock wherever it will ● 513 be hung. This hammock is a protection against snakes, ants, and other dangerous pests. The Caribs make a fire underneath at night to protect themselves from mosquitos and cool air. I have seen some Frenchmen who put mattresses on these hammocks to sleep as in Europe, always in line with the long dimension. This is different from the Caribs who sleep across the shorter dimension (in line with the two suspended ends), and use half of the breadth as a covering. [192]

491 Among the Caribs a bridge is a plank of wood or a felled tree across a brook. They do not use anything to bridge the large rivers, and they either become wet or cross over them in a small canoe. [361]

396 The Caribs hollow out and make a small canoe from a tree called by the French Holland cheese, because the axe cuts it like cheese. These canoes are used either when they are grating manioc or to go to some neighboring place. It rots immediately if left on the ground, but when it is soaked in water it lasts a sufficiently long time if it is taken out and set to dry. [175]

344 this they fasten rafters which slope to the ground, and these are covered with reeds or latan [palm] leaves. The result is that it is very dark in the carbet. Light enters only through the door, which is so low that one cannot enter without stooping. The boys are in charge of cleaning and sweeping the inside of the carbet, as well as the grounds around it. The girls and young women perform the same duties in smaller houses. The carbet is oval shaped. In one side
[776] there is a small special opening through which the Carib contend the devils enter when summoned by their boye. The devils are the only ones who use this entryway.

●513 The Caribs have no use for beds but always use cotton hammocks which they carry everywhere with them. Those who do not have cotton hammocks sleep on cabanes. These are made of four sticks
286 interlaced with cords of mahot bark. The wives sometimes spend a full year making a hammock. When they have spun seven or eight pounds of thick cotton thread which is smooth and well twisted, they arrange it on a loom as though they were making cloth. Then they weave the threads as our weavers do, except that the cloth is doubled and each end is left with a good foot of unwoven threads. The cloth is ten to twelve feet long and six feet wide.

To make the cloth into a hammock they take ten or twelve fathoms of aloes fiber cord, a bit thicker than our small cordage of the type called foit. Having bound together eight or ten of the loose threads at the end of the hammock, they fold this aloes cord into two-foot lengths, and then braid in eight or ten other loose threads. They make a fold in the fiber cord again and so forth until the end is reached. This being done they take another cord of aloes fiber as big as the finger, which is used to bind together all the folds of the first cord.

513 When they wish to sleep in it they tie the hammock with two big cords between large trees, or between two forks of the house supports. In tying, the hammocks are not taut but slack and bow-shaped. These hammocks are quite convenient and healthy because there is always fresh air. It is very pleasant to rest in one during the heat of the day in the cool shade under the trees. Almost all our Frenchmen use them, but chiefly those who are not married, for to sleep comfortably in a cotton hammock one should sleep alone.

513 When the hammocks are new they are as white as snow, but the
531 Caribs paint crude designs, in their fashion, with black paint which

513
[531] never fades. Then they paint them with oil and urucu to protect
[374] them from rain. The Caribs always make a fire under their hammocks for they are very sensitive to cold. The fire also protects them from mosquitos, but chiefly the Caribs say the fire protects them from maboya—evil spirits.

501 The barbarians make two kinds of boats in which they go to sea.
396 Their boats are much different from our boats and sloops. We call the biggest of their boats pirogues and the Carib name for them is canoua. We call the smallest of their boats canoes which are called by them couliala. Both types are made from whole trees which they trim, dig out, and then complete with implements bought from Europeans such as axes, adzes, and other tools. Prior to the trade with Europeans they spent entire years making them. They felled trees or burned them at the base, hollowing them out with stone axes and with a small fire which progressed a little at a time all along the pirogue until it had made the desired shape.

The pirogues seem to be nothing more than two large planks joined together at the base and six or seven feet wide between gunwales. At both extremities are pieces of planks, especially on the poop, because the pirogues are almost always a little bit higher there than in the front.

Ordinarily the pirogues are not high enough with just these first side planks, and they build up the sides from one end to the other with planks fifteen to sixteen inches wide. Without using nails they lash and fit these planks upon the pirogue with twine made from mahot. Next they caulk the joints with oakum made from the beaten bark of mahot. Over this caulking they bind small sticks with mahot twine. This is indeed very watertight, but it is not permanent and must be done over again and again.

On both sides of the pirogue they lash long poles, inside, half a foot below the gunwales. At two-foot intervals they lash thwarts which rest upon these two poles, and these are used as benches when they paddle.

501 The pirogues are usually forty feet long and seven to eight feet wide. The rudder is only a plank set without iron or nails into another piece of wood. The pirogues sometimes carry fifty people together with all their luggage. They use both sails and paddles.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
ST13 Callinago ST13

It is not usual for husband and wife to spend the whole night together—each retires to sleep on a separate couch or mat. 513

Rochefort mentions the fact that the Island Carib of his day never touched a pregnant woman. This is still true, be the woman his own wife or another. 843

I have heard a married woman protest that she was not normally pregnant, but that a piai had put a tête-chien (dog-headed Dominica constrictor) in her belly. On the other hand, legend reports this snake as having had connections with women in the old days.

Parturition is accomplished in a squatting or sitting posture (in the old days by straddling a hammock split lengthwise down the middle), and with the assistance of some old sage-femme, whose manipulations and remedies are of very doubtful benefit to the patient. After giving birth, the Carib woman remains confined to the house for 40 days; i. e., until her "retour de couches." 844

Suckling by the mother is general, and often of long duration. I came across a little boy of about 4 years, who, after helping his elder sister to carry up water from the river, used to claim and obtain refreshment from his mother's "tote-totes" (breasts; children's speech, possibly from Carib "totaka," to support). In the all-too-frequent event of a woman dying in childbirth, the maternal aunt or even the grandmother will suckle the infant. I was told that any woman who once has borne, irrespective of age, may induce lactation by the use of certain herbs, some applied locally, others taken internally. I was unable to learn their names, with two exceptions: the ripe fruit of the corossol (*Anona muricata*) and a berry they call kurupùm (*Renealmia exaltata* (?)). Whatever the cause, I myself witnessed the case of a woman whose youngest child was a grown man, giving the breast with apparent success to her niece's newborn baby. 853 [278]

Clever as the Carib woman would seem to be in inducing the rise of her milk, so her attempts to get rid of it appear clumsy to us. When the time for weaning has come, her usual procedure is to milk herself onto a fire stone, or, better still, into the nest hole of a species of large black ant, known locally as fourmis mordantes.

The naming of infants has, nowadays, become confused with Christian baptism, though the baptismal name itself is rarely, if ever, used in after life, its place being taken by another, chosen concurrently. Despite the priest's protests, baptism is delayed until at least one month after birth—that is, until the septa of the cranium have joined. The choice of names falls to the godparents—to the godfather in the case of a boy; to the godmother in the case of a girl. Carib names, such as Wàkanik, Màruka, Cimanàri, are known to have been used as recently as 20 years ago, but no living example remains. The nonbaptismal name now takes their place. Most families bear surnames, or, as they call them, "titles"—relics, in all 553

462 hammocks or smoking, crouched around their huts and appearing to meditate; they rarely speak and let their wives take care of all the work. Formerly they demanded absolute submission from them and did not permit them to take their meals with them. In the course of our trip, while we were passing in front of a Carib hut, we saw a young and strong man walking about calmly, surrounded by four children, the youngest of which was in his arms, while the women of the house busied themselves outside with the hardest work.

342 The Carib dwellings are rectangular huts more or less raised above the ground, with walls made of mixed straw of bamboo or some other wood and covered with palm leaves; sometimes they have over hangs as shelter against the sun. These huts differ little from what they were formerly, according to descriptions of them which the first observers left us, and at that time they called a group of huts a carbet(2),

> 2. This term has perpetuated itself in the French Antilles and in Martinique one still finds the village of Carbet and the peak of Carbet which dominates this settlement.

of which one was most important, in which an entire family lived. The house of the present Carib chief is of a more elaborate design, and the roof is of wood instead of thatch; inside it consists of four rooms, each containing a bed and chairs.

513 286 422 352 Personal property is usually simpler and consists of "hammocks," a word of Carib origin used in most European languages. The hammocks are made by the women out of cotton cultivated near the hut; they are braided and not woven, and existed even at the time of the conquest. They were dyed red with roucou, and according to Father Labat, there were some larger than others, called marriage hammocks, braided by mothers for their daughters when they were married, but 415 in which two people never slept together. The household utensils 285 are gourds of different sizes, vases of baked earth and skullfully woven baskets. The Carib basket serves the natives as chest and cupboard; /138/ it is made with the greatest care of reeds painted in different colors, and is so well constructed that water cannot pass through, and the cover of the basket fits the bottom so well that the heaviest rains cannot dampen the contents. Its shape is that of a rectangular parallelepiped twice as long as it is wide. It is very light, and the

11: Taylor E-5 (ca. 1930-1937)1946
ST13 Callinago ST13

After the evening meal, the short period before sleep is usually occupied in recounting in great detail the day's experiences. Like archery and pottery, cotton-spinning and hammock-weaving have become things of the past; and as the average Carib home possesses at most one bed, most of the family sleep on the floor or on hard wooden benches.

Death, burial, and mourning customs have been discussed in a previous paper.[8]

There is in the Carib Reserve no ownership of land other than the right to its produce and further exploitation conferred by continuous use. It is otherwise with (planted) fruit-bearing trees, houses, domestic animals, tools and implements, furniture, and the produce of various pursuits whether in cash or kind. Children are given gardens, trees, young pigs or hens for their own. Grown offspring are of course expected to contribute as best they can to the general economy of their (joint) family so long as they remain with it. But when they go to live with a wife, or to make a separate establishment, they take away with them whatever things or rights are theirs. Thus, the house and its contents belong to whichever spouse built, bought, or inherited them, and in the case of separation would be so allotted. In the event of the death of one of the spouses, the surviving spouse inherits the property of the deceased, but is expected to divide movables in excess of personal requirements between grown offspring or deceased's nearest kin. Provision-gardens may, unless apportioned before the late owner's death, be left intact to be worked communally by the surviving spouse and offspring. The fact that all children are allotted gardens, pigs, etc., of their own tends to prevent squabbles over inheritance. A deceased wife's parents are supposed to help their widowed son-in-law unless and until he remarry into another family. When both parents are dead, the house and its contents belong by right to the youngest surviving child, irrespective of sex. Other property may continue to be held communally (when the family remains together), or be divided equally among all the children or according to agreement or to the expressed wish of the deceased. The "old-time" Caribs are said to have been "uncivilized" because they never left anything for their children.

Kinship, reckoned bi-laterally, is recognized to at least the fourth degree (common law), and often far beyond. Nevertheless, it is rare that any obligation is acknowledge outside the joint family. Therefore, because this is largely matrilocal, greater concern is usually shown for mother's than for father's kin. The (Creole) kinship terminology current today naturally reflects French rather than native social structure, but there are several peculiarities in its employment

8 Taylor, *The Caribs of Dominica*, p. 121.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

in fire, *b*) titiri (a tiny fish) for steaming in a closed pot, *c*) sweetened meal of manioc or maize for boiling in water to make a kind of pudding. The midribs of the leaves are often sun-dried, cut to equal lengths and bound together at their ends parallel to one another so as to form roll-up mats used to sleep on. The petioles are often cut to form temporary braces used in making baskets. The leaves as well as the sap of the stem are employed as an unguent for burns, inflammation, etc. Balisier leaf heart together with water obtained from the hole of a pois doux (*Inga*) tree is used in the local treatment of erysipilis. The watery sap of balisier, mixed with the juicy pulp of the genip (*Genipa americana*) and with the ashes of burnt panicles of roseau (*Gynerium sagittatum*), is used as an unguent applied to yaws (framboesia). A red dye is said to have been made from the blue fruits.

Specimen citation: 1086, 2630.

Heliconia caribaea Lamarck, Encycl. 1: 426. 1783.
Heliconia bihai sensu authors (24).

Wild Plantain. — Balisier. — *balíri* (cf. *balúru*).

The commonest of the wild plantains generally confused even in current botanical literature with the preceding (24), but widely distributed throughout all the wet tropical regions bordering on the Caribbean. In Dominica colonies may be found in habitats similar to those occupied by the preceding species.

H. caribaea is put to the same use by the Caribs as is *H. bihai*.

Specimen citation: 3416, 3417.

Musa paradisiaca Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1043. 1753.

Plantain. Banane. — *balúru*, *baldiana* (cf. Spanish platano).

Plantains originated in southeastern Asia but are cultivated in the tropics throughout the world. They are said to have been introduced into Hispaniola about 1500 and are recorded from Dominica in 1595 (21). Since the latter date they have grown to be a staple cultivated food in Dominica where they often persist after cultivation.

The Island Caribs formerly pounded and dried the fruits to form a sort of paste or concentrated food taken on voyages and consumed after mixing with water. Today plantains form one of